The Reuben Kramer Papers
MS 13

Finding aid prepared by Anita Carrico

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Enoch Pratt Free Library Special Collections
October 2004
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Summary Information

Repository	Enoch Pratt Free Library Special Collections
Creator - Donor	Kramer, Reuben, 1909-1999
Title	The Reuben Kramer Collection
Date [inclusive]	1925-1991
Extent	12.0 Linear feet 9 boxes
Language	English
Abstract	Reuben Kramer (1909-1999), was a prize-winning and internationally recognized Baltimore artist known for his sculpture and drawings. This collection largely consists of personal photographs, newspaper clippings, letters, invitations and mementos of the artist's 50 years as a sculptor, which he donated to the library from 1975 through 1991. The Enoch Pratt Free Library has a small collection of his sculpture and pen and ink drawings in the library.

Biographical/Historical note

Reuben Kramer (1909-1999) was born in East Baltimore. He was one of six children born to parents who emigrated from Russia to the United States in the 1890s. He was drawn to sculpting while in junior high school and this interest deepened much to the chagrin of his father who had chosen surgery as the profession for this son. He attended evening classes at the Maryland Institute and then enrolled as a full-time student in the Rinehart School of Sculpture of the Institute in 1927. In the spring of 1931, Kramer won the Rinehart Traveling Scholarship and won it again in 1933. It was during those trips that Kramer visited Jacob Epstein in London, traveled throughout Europe and spent the summer studying in Paris at L'Academie de la Grande-Chaumiere, the school where Bourdelle taught. This influence resulted in his production of the huge "Dying Centaur" which won the coveted Prix de Rome in 1934 and he spent the next two years at the American Academy in Rome. Returning to Baltimore in autumn of 1936, his works were exhibited at the Grand Central Galleries in New York and at the Maryland Institute that winter.

Reuben Kramer spent the year 1937-38 in London working prodigiously and when he returned to Baltimore his London work was exhibited at the Baltimore Museum of Art. During the war years, 1042-1945, he was a draftsman with the Design and Development section of Army Ordinance at Aberdeen, MD. During those years he experimented with fashioning tools and jewelry. He married painter, Perna Krick in 1944. Together they founded the Baltimore Art Center for Children, the first licensed, desegregated art school in Maryland. He served as its director from 1944-1956. He won first prize in the All-Maryland Show in 1946 and grand prize in 1948. In 1964, he received a grant for sculpture from the National Institute of Arts and Letters and began to receive more commissions.

The majority of the mature works of Reuben Kramer were in bronze. His appreciation for working with clay and bronze and his love for the human figure resulted in many works of the human form and many portrait busts. Several of these are in the collection of the Enoch Pratt Free Library as are several of his pen and ink drawings.

Reuben Kramer died in 1999 at the age of 89. He left behind him a large body of work. In Baltimore, it includes several public art pieces, including a clay relief sculpture for the city's first public housing project, Frederick Douglass Homes, a head of Governor Theodore R. McKeldin installed in the State Office Building in Baltimore, as well as an 8 and 1/2 foot statue of Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, which stands in downtown Baltimore at the Garmatz Federal Courthouse on West Pratt Street.

Scope and Contents note

The Reuben Kramer collection ranges in date from 1925-1991, beginning with Reuben as a young sculptor at age 15. The archive contains correspondence, newspaper articles and photographs mounted

on boards, placed in folders and boxed by him. The collection remains in the original format as it was presented to the Enoch Pratt Library in 1975 and as it was added to by Kramer through 1991.

Arrangement

The Reuben Kramer Papers consists of his Life and Works from 1925-1991. It includes the Prix de Rome, 1934-1936 and subsequent materials from his Life and Works from 1936-1991, which includes his donation to Pratt. Note that Boards 245, 247, 248, 249 missing. His Works of Art contain a bronze and two framed drawings.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Enoch Pratt Free Library Special Collections October 2004

Revision Description

Finding aid revised by Anita Carrico. Entered into Archivist's Toolkit by Joan M. Wolk, January 2015. 2009

Conditions Governing Access

Unrestricted, open by appointment.

Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Reuben Kramer donated his archives to the Enoch Pratt Free Library in July 1975. They consisted of meticulously prepared boards/leaves mounted with his personal photographs, newspaper clippings, letters, invitations and mementos of his 50 years as a sculptor. Mr. Kramer continued to add to the collection through 1991.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- American Academy in Rome.
- Baltimore Art Center for Children.
- Baltimore Museum of Art.
- L’Academie de la Grande-Chaumiere.
- Maryland Institute.
- Prix de Rome.
- Rinehart School of Sculpture.
- Rinehart Traveling Scholarship.

Genre(s)

- Correspondence
- newspapers
- Pen drawing
- Sculpture
- statuary bronze

Occupation(s)

- Artists
- Sculptors

Collection Inventory

Series I: Life and Works 1925-1991 9 boxes		**Box** 1-9
Subseries 1: Student Work and Rinehart School 1925-1934	**Box** 1	**Folder** 1a/b-33
Subseries 2: Prix de Rome 1934-1936	**Box** 2	**Folder** 34-69
Subseries 3: Life and Works 1936-1951	**Box** 3	**Folder** 70-99
Subseries 4: Life and Works 1952-1956	**Box** 4	**Folder** 100-129
Subseries 5: Life and Works 1955-1963	**Box** 5	**Folder** 130-159
Subseries 6: Life and Works 1963-1969	**Box** 6	**Folder** 160-189
Subseries 7: Life and Works 1969-1974	**Box** 7	**Folder** 190-216
Subseries 8: Life and Works and Donation to Pratt 1975-1978	**Box** 8	**Folder** 217-240
Subseries 9: Life and Works 1979-1991 Box 9, Folders 245, 247, 248, 249 missing	**Box** 9	**Folder** 241-268
Series II: Works of Art		
Sculpture		
	Room	**Shelf**

The Philosopher - Bronze	SPC MSS Room	X 2
		Room
Sam the Fish		Long-term storage
Portrait Bust of Gerald Johnson made of white marble		Long-term storage
Thurgood Marshall		Long-term storage

Framed Drawings		
	Map-case	**Drawer**
Young Girl with Flowers	4	63
Assorted Flowers	4	63
The Scholar	4	63
Girl with Flowers	4	64
The Russian Rabbi	4	64
Joe the Vulture	4	64
		Room

Framed Drawings

Bird I	Long-term storage
Frog	Long-term storage